

## Jealousy and pain, a common theme. by frecklefaced

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Inspired by Stranger Things (TV 2016), M/M, Male Homosexuality, Multi, byler

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Bob Newby, Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lonnie Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers/Bob Newby, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers/Lonnie Byers, Maxine "Max" Mayfield & Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

Will and Mike. Mike and Will. No matter which way it is said it still means the same thing. These two have been inseparable since kindergarten, and they've been through everything side by side. The laughs, the ugly cries, and the upside down. But what happens when a small and powerful little girl tears them apart? Will's life gets turned upside down once again, but in a different way.

# 1. Christmas break

## Author's Note:

Hello everyone, I am new to AO3, but I've been writing fan fics for the longest time. Throughout my time on this site I am going to try and put out my best work. I hope you enjoy this! PS: This chapter contains violence and homophobic slurs.

It was a few weeks after the Snowball winter dance. School was on break for two weeks and the party had big plans on what they were going to do during their time off. Mike had the brilliant idea to stay over at Eleven and Hopper's cabin for a few days. They decided it sounded fun so they all agreed to meet at Mike's house on Monday morning, each of them bringing one of the important ingredients for a fun filled week long sleepover. Mike and Lucas were to bring the games, Dustin of course complied to bring the snacks, Will volunteered to bring some of his art supplies, Eleven already had the sleeping bags covered, and Max was exempted from bringing anything considering her living situation.

It was only nine AM on Sunday morning and Will was contemplating calling in sick the next day so he could escape from everyone for a little while. He loved his party. He really did. But sometimes he needed time to think. Time to address everything that was going on.

He was happy that everyone was happy. Lucas had Max, Dustin was still in shock that Nancy danced with him, and Mike, well Mike had Eleven. They were all happy.

Except for Will. He was always the one not having anyone to hold hands with, or show his affection for. Sure, he had that random girl at the Snowball who danced with him, but afterwards the girl apologized and said it was a dare from her friends.

Will refrained from telling his friends because he didn't want them to worry. He never wanted them to worry. He always felt like a burden. He tried to remain silent about his emotions, flashbacks, and nightmares. He didn't want anyone fretting over him. He agreed silently to himself that he was not a little boy anymore, and therefore didn't need to be treated like fragile glass that could break at any second.

After getting lost in the sea of his thoughts the clock read 11:30 am. He sighed quietly and reluctantly got up and started to pack his bags. He packed clothes for only three days hoping that it would be a good enough excuse to go home early. Anything to get out of the same room as Mike and Eleven attached at the hip cuddling non-stop. He then went to his art supply, which was in his closet, and grabbed two hand fulls of paintbrushes and dumped it into another bag. Then he went to his paint drawer and rummaged through looking for his watercolor sets. He frowned when he realized he was running low on most of his colors.

He left everything on his dresser and walked out into the living room where his mother was sitting. She was leaning up against Hopper, resting her feet on the other end of the couch.

"Mom?" He asked hesitantly. She turned her head towards her small son and Hopper quickly followed her eyes. They both smiled sincerely with a twinge of sadness in their eyes. Will hated this. He hated that everyone in town looked down at him. The only person who doesn't do that is Mike. Will wondered if that's the reason why he feels so safe when he's alone with Mike. He quickly pushed the thought down when he noticed that his mom was staring at him.

"Do you need anything baby? What's wrong?" Joyce asked with a sound of worry in her throat. Will walked slowly to the edge of the

couch.

"Well I'm going to hang out with the party this week and I need more paint. Can you take me to the store in a few minutes?" He asked in a low voice. He didn't want to be too needy because he knew how hard his mother worked to keep the bills paid.

"I'd love to sweetie, but I've got work in an hour." She paused and thought for a second. "Johnathan can take you!" She beamed. Will nodded and slowly walked to Johnathan's room, feeling the other's eyes glued to his back. When he reached the door he knocked gently three times and waited for a reply.

"Come in" a voice from behind the door called back. He quickly walked in and shut the door behind him.

"Is mom acting weird today?" Will asked looking at what Johnathan was doing. Johnathan was organizing his tapes. "Should I stay or should I go?" was playing softly in the background. That song always calmed Will down, and he laid back onto the soft pillows and let out a loud sigh.

"I think it's because Hopper's here. And they're spending one on one time. Mom hasn't had that since Lonnie, and we both know that that isn't a good example." Johnathan replied in a monotone voice.

"Ah okay." was all Will managed to get out. To Will everyone seemed to be acting weird today. He began to wonder if maybe it was him. He shed off the theory and looked over at his brother. He was hunched down angled towards his boom box.

"Did you need something buddy?" He asked. -That sounded more like him!- Will thought.

"Oh..yeah.. can you drive me to the art store today? I need more paint." He asked knowing his brother wouldn't say no to him.

"Sure buddy." Johnathan said turning and leaning in to his brother playfully. "We can leave in about 10 minutes if you want?" Johnathan belted out happily. Will nodded and smiled a little as he inched off

the bed and to the door.

"Thanks" Will said quickly and with that he opened the door and zoomed to his room. Will checked his art supplies again, making a list of all the colors he needed. He scribbled down on the note quickly and then stuffed it in his pocket. He threw on his coat and jammed his feet into his shoes. Will walked out of his room and waited patiently at the front door for his brother.

A few minutes later Johnathan walked out of his room and walked to the couch. He rubbed his mom's arm sincerely. "Don't work too hard tonight mom" was all he said and then he waltzed to the front door smiling gleefully at Will. "Ready buddy?" He asked ruffling Will's hair a little. Will giggled quietly and then fixed his hair. He was a perfectionist when it came to his hair. Will nodded reassuringly and they both walked out to the car and got in.

The drive to downtown was silent with only the sound of Christmas music on the radio playing softly. The song "Christmas is the Time to say I Love You" came on and Johnathan started bobbing his head to the beat.

Will laughed slightly and then asked "who is this by?" trying to speak over the music.

"Billy squier!" Johnathan replied bobbing his head faster.

The lyrics flooded the car. "Christmas is the time to say 'I love you.' And the feeling that will last all through the year." Will smiled at the lyrics. There weren't many Christmas songs about love and Will

enjoyed imagining how he would sing it to the one he loves.

Soon they arrive at the store and Johnathan unlocks the door. "You okay to go in by yourself? I'm gonna drive to the store and pick up a few things for the house." He asked. Will nodded and smiled before getting out of the car and waving his brother off. He walked to the entrance where a beautiful Garland wreath hanging. He admired it. He always had a creative side, which only his friends ever saw, and he enjoyed appreciating crafts. He opened the door and it gave a little jungle which prompted the cashier to welcome the new customer.

"Good afternoon! Merry Christmas!" The tall man said from behind the counter. When Will was close enough he thanked him and returned a smile. He searched around quietly observing all the new colors they had gotten since the last time he was in. He picked out each item and crossed out the item from his list. After he'd gotten a full basket full he took it to the counter. The cashier rung him up with a smile on his face the whole time.

"You're total is \$22.59" the cashier said. Will pulled out his wallet. He only had \$25 but he only ever spent his money on art supplies. He handed the cash over and as soon as he got his receipt and change back he was on his way out. He walked outside but his brother wasn't there yet so he decided to sit down on a bench and wait. A few moments passed until a few boys that Will knew walked by.

Troy and his friends. They noticed Will and trotted over to him with pride. "Little fairy buying some faggot materials?" Troy said as his little posse stood behind him with evil grins on their face. Will was used to the name calling by now and he decided to ignore it. "You not gonna look at me fairy? Too embarrassed? Scared?" Troy mocked while he pushed Will's right arm around. Will stood up. He didn't feel

like dealing with any shit today and even though he was half Troy's size he stood with bravery.

"Don't you have any better to do on a Sunday than pick on the town's local zombie boy?" Will asked hoping they would soon leave him alone. Troy frowned and then looked back at his boys and nodded. Next thing Will knew he was thrown to the ground and was being kicked. He didn't know where he was being kicked though because the pain was immense and radiated throughout his whole body. While each of Troy's friends got a side of Will Troy pulled out his Swiss army knife and leaned over Will. He gently stroked it across Byer's face leaving a faint scratch. It bled slightly and Will winched in pain.

Suddenly Troy held the knife to Will's throat. "If you ever talk back to me again it won't be a little scratch. You understand?" Troy asked with authority. Will quickly nodded scared that he might lose his life.

Just then Johnathan pulled up and jumped out of the car to catch Troy but him and his friends ran off in time to get away. Johnathan didn't bother chasing after him and instead he ran to his brother to help him up. Will winched over and over coming to tears.

"Will what happened?????" Johnathan asked clearly concerned. Will hobbled to the car and gestured for his brother to follow. He did so and and helped easy Will into the passenger side.

"They just saw me and attacked." Was all Will could cough out. His face was bleeding even more now and he held his sleeve to it to try and stop the bleeding. Johnathan had no idea what to do so he just got in the car and drove home to figure out if mom was home. Sure enough she had already left for work so he cleaned Will's cuts and

bruises up himself.

"You're not going tomorrow to El's!" Johnathon warned him. Will didn't want to go but he didn't want to seem like a baby and he knew he would truthfully be bored by himself.

"No! I'm going. I have to. I can't miss it." He fired back. They argued back and forth and then finally agreed that he could go for a few days and when mom came back for work Johnathan would explain what happened and they'd go to Hopper with the whole situation. Will didn't want to get the police involved because they would only make it worse, but Will trusted Hopper so it was okay. Will walked slowly to his room and finished packing his bags. He rolled up his long sleeves halfway to reveal horizontal pinkish marks on his wrists. He knew he needed to stop but will everything that was going on that was how he coped. His excuse was that it was better than pulling his hair out or inflicting pain on others. He really was feeling like shit, and really needed a huge hug and a ruffle of his hair, which always calmed him down when he was anxious or stressed. He couldn't wait to see that special someone tomorrow morning, and that was what was keeping his mind off of the bad thoughts. He soon fell asleep on his bed packing his bags, and later on Johnathan came in and tucked him in.



## 2. Connection

### Summary for the Chapter:

Will and El head off to Mike's house. You can see the connection that Will and Mike have from the second they see each other. Maybe even El notices?

Will soon wakes up in a daze. He looks around frantically, eyes filled with worry. He tries to slow down his breathing but he can't. He wonders what time it is, but he can't seem to bring himself to get up and check. He tried remembering why he was breathing so heavily. And then it hit him. Another stupid nightmare. He recalled briefly what it was, but not the tiny details. He thought real hard and then popped his eyes open.

"Mike." He said softly. He had dreamt of Mike. Mike was in some sort of trouble in his dream. He didn't remember what caused it, he just knew he needed to see Mike and make sure he was okay. He slowly flung the sheet and blanket off his body and then moved his legs to the side of the bed. With a deep sigh he stood up, wavering a little. He held his head. 'What's going on with me?'. He felt dizzy and nauseated at the same time. He grabbed onto the bed for support and gradually gained his balance. He noticed his bag halfway open spilling its contents of art supplies on the floor. It was a reminder of what happened yesterday with Troy and his friends. He frowned and trodded out of his room to the bathroom, dragging his foot behind.

"Good morning sleepy head!" Joyce says cheerfully ruffling Will's fringe into an even more tangled mess.

Will smiled weakly in return reaching up and kissing his mom's cheek. Luckily she's already short so it's easy for him to extend himself to her face. A few moments later Hopper was standing next to Joyce holding her lower back with his arm. He planted a quick peck on her forehead and then places his attention to Will.

"Damn Will, they really got you huh?" Hop said/asked sympathetically. Jim reached out and touched Will's cheek gently and Will winched slightly at the contact, but he soon relaxed. Hopper

frowned.

"I'm gonna make them pay, don't worry buddy." Hopper said with a tinge of hope.

"N-no it's fine. It really isn't that big a deal."

"No. We're gonna get them, and we're gonna make them pay for all the hell they put you through."

Will shrugged it off and freed himself of the two adults' grip. He continued his trek to the bathroom and then used the toilet. He went to wash his hands, but his reflection in the mirror caught his eye. He looked up. He stared at himself. He inspected his features. He looked first at his hair. He never particularly liked his bowl cut, but he was afraid that if he got it cut shorter, then Troy would have even more reason to call him names. He looked into his eyes. They were so brown. He hated his eyes. He was always so intrigued by blue and green eyes, and the way they sparkle every which way. Then he looked at his lips. The lips that turned blue so many times. More specifically when he kept his room cold for days when the mind flayer communicated that it liked it cold. He was so glad that was over, and he was relieved that things could go back to the way they had always been. Unfortunately nothing went back to normal. It did for all the other kids because all they had to do was fit in the new plus one, El. For Will it was harder, and the party knew that, but they didn't quite understand how hard it was. He tried his best to be okay. He knew it'd take a lot of time, and he came to terms with the fact that he'd probably never be one-hundred percent back to the original Will. But oh did he try. He tried so much. He got frustrated with himself for feeling what he was feeling. The urge to just scrape at his body. Carve out little shapes and lines, like he was perfecting a sculpture. Like everything else he tried hard at, he tried to stop the artistic slashes that he placed all over the hidden parts of his body. But sometimes the need to feel that euphoria was too strong, and he couldn't overcome it, and he soon gave in to the temptations. It was a recurring theme, the pain. Not only the physical pain of the actual cuts on him, but the heartache he was experiencing at the same time. Will quickly snapped out of whatever he was in, and shut his eyes, trying to process his thoughts. They flew all around his brain, and the only thing he knew for certain was that he was hungry. He regained

himself as much as he could and then exited the bathroom. He plopped into a chair at the small dinner table and slumped down into it, rubbing his eyes sleepily. When he opened his eyes he was greeted by a tiny girl seated across from him. He studied the face and quickly realized that it was Eleven. She beamed. She was overjoyed for some reason that Will couldn't place his finger on.

"Oh hi." Will said sheepishly.

"Hey. I stayed the night last night because Dad did and he said I could not be home alone." El replied explaining why she was sitting in his kitchen that early. Will only nodded and El kept on rambling about her being excited for later. She mentioned how they could walk to Mike's house together. Will nodded again. Thankfully Jonathan saved Will by bringing in two plates of breakfast and placing them on the table. A plate consisted of two scrambled eggs, a piece of toast, and a cut up apple. Will smiled shyly at his brother to say thank you, and Jonathan grinned back. Will shoveled his food in like he hadn't eaten in days. Truthfully he hadn't, but he wasn't going to admit that to his mom because he knew she'd freak out and worry over him even more. After he practically licked his plate clean he placed his plate in the sink and told El he was going to finish packing his bags and change, and then they could leave for Mike's house. He took a peek at the clock on his way out and saw that it was ten o'clock. He didn't remember what time they were supposed to meet, but he knew he needed to hurry. So he threw on a random sweater -he made sure it covered his arms for obvious reasons- and then he shimmied his way into his dark blue jeans. He grabbed the art supplies that had fell onto the floor and put them back into his backpack and then he zipped it up.

Will ran out of his room all dressed and ready to go. He kissed his mom goodbye, listening to her ramble about him being safe, and he told her he'd call and check in each night to tell him he was okay. Then he gave Jonathan the tightest hug ever. He knew he was going to miss his brother, but he knew he needed to get out of the house. Hopper gave El a lecture about being smart with her powers because he couldn't lose his little girl. And with that they were off. Will led the way, eager to get to Mike's. He was surprised El hadn't said anything about his scuff marks that were all over his body. He hoped

that Mike would not worry too much, but at the same time he hoped that Mike would be overprotective, because damn was he cute when he was overprotective. On the way there El was talking about her excitement for the week. Will usually enjoyed listening to her talk on and on, because after all she has been locked in a small room for most of her life. But today was different. He wished she would just shut up. He felt guilty for thinking that considering El sacrificed her life to save Will countless times. He shuffled his thoughts around for what seemed like ages before he snapped out of his head when El poked his shoulder.

"You okay Will?" El said worriedly-she was getting really good at regular conversation. |

"Oh yeah. Just thinking." Will replied hesitantly. El accepted the answer with a shrug and they kept walking on.

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Will walked up to the front door, admiring their Christmas decorations. He gently knocked three times and Mrs. Wheeler answered and greeted them with a bright smile. She was in long jeans and a striped sweater, holding Holly on her hip.

"Will!!" Holly exclaimed reaching for him to hold her. Will and Holly always had a strong bond, and Holly just adored Will. Will closed the gap between them and grabbed her tightly.

"Hi Holly! I missed you so much!" Will beamed at her. He loved her like his own sister, and sometimes he was jealous that Mike was able to have a younger sibling. Karen yelled up the stairs that Mike's friends were here, and then she vanished.

"I have something to show you Willy!" Holly looked so happy in Will's arms, and Will looked proud holding her and hearing his special nickname fly out of Holly's little mouth.

"Oh you do?!" Will asked acting surprised. He really wasn't cause' everytime he came over Holly always had a new toy or trick to show him. She nodded her tiny head, pigtails bobbing up and down. He placed her feet into the ground and she grabbed three of his fingers,

tugging him into the living room. Will smiled and let her drag him along.

A few moments later Mike appeared in front of eleven and she practically jumped into his arms. He held her for a few seconds before letting go and then placing a quick kiss on the cheek. She blushed red. Mike didn't. He never did. Not unless the person was Will. He put his arm gently around her lower back and guided her into the living room where Will and Holly were. Mike saw Will playing with his little sister and his heart almost popped open, overflowing with admiration. He stood there staring at his best friend so long that his arm got tired and dropped by itself from El's back, dangling by his side lifelessly. Will looked up and met Mike's eyes.

"Oh hi Mike! What? Do I have something in my hair?" Will asked as he noticed Mike staring at him. He felt around his hair looking for whatever must have been caught in it.

Now Mike was blushing. He walked towards Mike and chuckled nervously.

"Oh no, haha, you just- nevermind" he cut himself off. Will shrugged and went back to Holly's attention. When Mike's mind came back into focus he looked at Will for real. He noticed the blue almost purple bruises along his collarbone and the red bump atop his forehead. He rushed to him worried for his friend.

"What happened Will!?" He said frantically. He placed his left hand onto Will's shoulder trying to comfort him.

"It's nothing, I ran into Troy and his friends the other day and we had a little argument. It's fine. It's okay." Will said reassuringly. Mike wouldn't take that for an answer.

"Troy? That little asshole. I'll kill him" Mike said clenching his fists and standing up as if he was going to find Troy right now. Will grabbed Mike's hand and held it tightly to stop him from leaving. Will's hands were icy cold, and Mike reasoned that it was because of the small snowfall that started to drop early this morning. Mike thought his heart would just stop beating right there. He never really connected physically with Will, no matter how much he wanted to he

always only let it go as far as a friendly poke or high five. But this time something was different. He felt truly connected to Will. Like he was letting him in finally. But then Will took his hand away, jolting Mike back to reality.

"First of all Mike, child!" Will pointed to Holly who was staring back with confusion in her eyes.

"Second, I'm fine. I really am. Let's just go and have a good time." Mike agreed and put out a friendly hand to help Will up. He got up, and then they disconnected once again. They flipped on the TV while they waited for the others to arrive. El sat in the corner confused, but silent. She was beginning to think something else was going on, but she pushed the thought aside because her favorite program was on, and she rarely got TV time anymore.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Hope you enjoyed! Sorry it's sort of short and boring. More plot to come. Kudos and comments are very appreciated. Plus my Twitter is @bylerfeels if you ever wanna talk!

### **Author's Note:**

If you made it all the way through, thank you so much. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated, and stay tuned for the next chapter.